HUM 203: MAJOR WORKS OF OTTOMAN CULTURE
Fall 2011

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Office Hours: Wednesdays, FASS 2035, 13:30-15:30

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Lectures: Wednesdays, FASS 1089, 10:40-12:30
Discussion A: Wednesdays, FENS L035, 13:40-14:30
Discussion B: Wednesdays, FENS L035, 14:40-15:30

This course will focus on a selected few masterpieces of Ottoman artistic and literary production, picked on the basis of not only their high aesthetic qualities, but also their representativeness across different genres and historical periods. A problem-oriented approach, therefore, may and shall be woven around them, but by starting with the works themselves, and proceeding from them to explore successive and ever-expanding backgrounds, instead of creating a relatively "complete" or continuous narrative of cultural history from the outset and submerging a much larger number of works within it. As key examples to be subjected to such close "readings," the following have been opted for: (1) Mehmed II's portrait by Şiblieddin Ahmed, (2) the Süleymaniye Complex by Mimar Sinan; (3) imperial kaftans and İznik ceramics of anonymous artists; (4) Nakkaş Osman's pictorial eulogy of the dynasty and the Ottoman "Book of Kings"; (5) Buhurızâde Mustafa Itrî’s "Tütti-i mucize gıyem ne desem lâf değil"; (6) Nedim’s Istanbul poetry, and finally, (7) the works of Ahmed Karahisari (1470?-1556). It is thereby proposed to introduce students both to a whole range of modes of expression (such as monumental religious architecture, decorative programs of line and colour, the arts of the book, and the conventions of composition, both musical and literary), and to analytical perspectives on two main periods of Ottoman history with their specific power relations, socio-economic problems, ideological re-adjustments, sensitivities and outlooks.

Course requirements: (1) Attendance, participation in discussion sections, quizzes and field trips (20%); (2) two short paper assignments (TBA): for both papers, each of 5-10 pages, you are asked to choose a topic from one of the seven modules, to build your own bibliography from a preliminary bibliography that will be made available (15% each); (3) a midterm exam on 23 November, 10:40-12:30 pm (20%); and (4) a final exam (TBA) (30%). Meeting the deadlines will be one of the factors in assessing your paper grades. Your attendance and participation in sections will keenly be observed and graded accordingly.

A preliminary bibliography for further research that will be relevant to many different topics is also going to be provided, and these sources will be available at the reserve library.

Hum 203 Reader: Available at the Canon.

WebCT: All visual materials shown and discussed in the lectures shall be posted on the WebCT. You shall also be able to refer to: (1) study questions; (2) a glossary of terms; and (3) a list of further readings.
Şiblizâde Ahmed’s Portrait of Mehmed II and
Ottoman Royal Portraiture

1. (28 September) Ottomans and Figurative Arts


2. (5 October) Genres of Ottoman Royal Portraiture in Context


Mimar Sinan and
Süleymaniye as an Icon of Power

3. (12 October) The Enigma of Mimar Sinan


4. (19 October) Architecture for Imperial Legacy


Nakkaş Osman and
Şahnames (Book of the Kings)

5. (26 October) The Artist and the Magnificent Sultan


6. (2 November) Artistic and Individual Styles

W. Denny, "Dating Ottoman Works in the Saz Style", Muqarnas 1, 1983, 103-121.

9 November NO CLASS

Court Workshops (Ehl-i Hiref) and
Ceramics and Textiles
7. (16 November) An Imperial Artistic Tradition and the Birth of an Ottoman Idiom

"Textiles and Ceremonies at the Ottoman Court", in Ipek: Imperial Ottoman Silks and Velvets, Nurhan Atasoy ... [et al.], , İstanbul, 2001, 21-36.

(19 November) Trip to Rüstem Paşa and Süleymaniye Mosques

8. (23 November) MIDTERM 10:40-12:30

Tütî-i mucize gûyem ne desem lâf değil
text by Nefî, (d. 1635); music by Buhurizâde Mustafa Itri (d. 1712)

9. (30 November) Testimony of Sources to Ottoman Music


10. (7 December) The Ottoman Sound


Nedim’s (d. 1730) Poetry of İstanbul

11. (14 December) The Myths about Divan Poetry


12. (21 December) The Myths about Divan Poetry


(24 December) Trip to SU SSM Calligraphy Collection

Ahmed Karahisari (1470?-1556) and
Ottoman Calligraphy

13. (28 December) From Alphabet to Art


M. U. Derman, "The Art of Turkish Calligraphy", in The Sultan's Signature. Ottoman Calligraphy from the Sakip Sabanci Museum. Sabancı University, Berlin, 2001, 3-44.

14. (4 January 2012) Why Calligraphy is High Culture?

FINAL EXAM (TBA) : 9-21 January 2012